ON THE

DUTIES OF PHYSICIANS,

RESULTING FROM THEIR PROFESSION.

BY THE LATE

REV. THOMAS GISBORNE, M.A.

OXFORD:

JOHN HENRY PARKER.

LONDON: JOHN CHURCHILL, PRINCES STREET, SOHO.

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The following pages form the twelfth chapter of Gisborne's* "Enquiry into the Duties of Men in the Higher and Middle Classes of Society in Great Britain, resulting from their respective Stations, Professions, and Employments;" and are extracted in the hope that they may be more widely circulated among the members of the Medical Profession, and consequently more useful, if published in a separate form. They are reprinted from the Sixth Edition in two volumes 8vo. London, 1811. Nothing has been altered or omitted, because, though some few passages are a little old-fashioned and out of date, the Editor found nothing in the sentiments to disapprove of or condemn; and nothing has been added, because the little work is already complete in itself according to the writer's own plan, and

* The Rev. Thomas Gisborne, M.A., the author of numerous religious works, and Prebendary of Durham; born Oct. 31. 1758, died March 24. 1846. (See *Gent. Mag.* for June 1846.)

any attempt on the part of the Editor to supply its deficiencies, and thus convert it into a complete treatise on Medical Ethics, would have been both vain and unsatisfactory. The want of a detailed and scientific work on this subject, suited to Great Britain, (as Simon's admirable *Déontologie Médicale* is to France,) has indeed long occupied the Editor's thoughts, and is what he hopes, if life and leisure be allowed him, and if no abler writer step forward to anticipate his design, to endeavour at some future time to supply.

June 12. 1847.

ON THE DUTIES OF PHYSICIANS[a].

THE Medical Profession enjoys in Great Britain that degree of estimation and credit, which a science, administering to mankind the greatest of all comforts except those of Religion, justly deserves. Hence Physicians in this kingdom are almost invariably men of liberal education and cultivated minds. Hence too the art of Medicine is carried among us to a singular height of excellence. In Spain, Physicians (unless the case be recently altered,) are apparently not respected much more than farriers are in England. "In point of

[a] In some parts of this [work] I am indebted for several important hints to Dr. Gregory's Preliminary Lecture "On the Duties and Offices of a Physician:" and for others to the first part of a treatise entitled, "Medical Jurisprudence, or a Code of Ethics and Institutes adapted to the Professions of Physic and Surgery;" by my excellent friend Dr. Percival of Manchester; which, as far as it was then composed, was communicated to me by him in the kindest manner. [This latter work was afterwards enlarged and published with the title, "Medical Ethics; or, a Code of Institutes and Precepts, adapted to the Professional Conduct of Physicians and Surgeons," 1803. 8vo. It is also found in the second volume of Percival's *Works*, 4 vols. 8vo. 1807.]

honour," says a modern traveller[b] through the former country, "no class of citizens meets with less respect than the Physicians." We are therefore not surprised to find the same author observing in another[c] place that "the science and practice of Medicine are at the lowest ebb in Spain."—"The emoluments of the Spanish Physician are as low as the rank in which he is held. Even in the present day[d] the fee of the Physician is two-pence from the tradesman, ten-pence from the man of fashion, and nothing from the poor. Some of the noble families agree with a Physician by the year, paying him annually fourscore reals, that is sixteen shillings, for his attendance on them and their families."—"Of three-score Physicians[e] set-

[b] Townsend's *Journey through Spain*, 2nd edit. vol. iii. p. 282; where the writer proceeds to inform us, that all Physicians and Surgeons are obliged to swear, before they enter into their profession, that they will defend the doctrine of the Virgin Mary having been born without any taint of original sin. This obligation is the more strangely absurd, because the truth of the doctrine in question is strongly contested even among the [Roman] Catholics themselves.

[c] Vol. ii. p. 37.

[d] Id., vol. iii. p. 282.

[e] Townsend's *Journey through Spain*, 2nd edit. vol. iii. p. 340. The irrational interference of the Spanish Government in medical practice tends equally to depress the science and its professors. We learn from the writer already quoted, that in the year 1784, and again in the subsequent year, a putrid fever raging in some of the provinces, the Court issued out an order to the Physicians, forbidding them to administer any medicine to the sick

tled at Barcelona, the two already named are most distinguished, and have the most extensive practice. One of them favoured me with a sight of his list. He had visited more than forty patients in the morning, and he was to see as many before he went to bed. Among these were many merchants, manufacturers, and officers; yet he did not expect to receive a hundred reals, that is twenty shillings, for the whole practice of the day*." In Great Britain, though the Medical Profession does not

except Don Joseph Masdeval's opiate. The Physicians strongly remonstrated against the order; but were informed expressly from the King, that his majesty would have it so; and that, in case of disobedience, the prison doors stood open to receive them. At Barcelona the Physicians, highly to their honour, were firm; and the Court let the matter drop. At Carthagena they were intimidated; and not only consented to prescribe the opiate in all cases, but meanly signed a certificate testifying that no medicine was so efficacious as the royal prescription. The people of the city however were not so submissive; and conceiving that the application of Dr. Masdeval's specific to every kind of disease left them a worse chance of life than trusting to the unaided operations of Nature, absolutely refused to send for any medical assistance. The Court, hearing that the Physicians were likely to be starved, at length agreed to a compromise; leaving them at liberty to follow their judgment in prescribing for the citizens at large, but compelling them to administer the opiate, and that remedy alone, to all the patients in the Royal Hospital. See Townsend's *Journey*, vol. iii. p. 137, 142, and 341.

[* The state of the Medical Profession in Spain does not seem to be much improved even now. See an extract from Mr. Ford's *Hand-book of Spain*, in the *Lond. Med. Gaz.* for Oct. 1845. p. 1124.]

possess so many splendid prizes as the Church and the Bar, and on that account perhaps is rarely, if ever, pursued by young men of noble families ; it is by no means barren of honours and attractions. It opens the way to reputation and wealth ; and raises the Physician to a level, in the intercourse of common life, with the highest classes of society.

The method pursued in this [little work], will be the following :—

The duties incumbent on the Medical Student during the course of his preparatory pursuits, will be considered in the first place . . p. 5.

In the second place, will be stated some observations referring to the peculiar situation of a Physician, when he commences the exercise of his profession . . . . . p. 13.

The third head will be allotted to the general duties of the Physician in actual practice. Under this description is implied the conduct which he ought to adopt, 1. towards his patients, their families and friends; 2. towards other Physicians ; and 3. towards persons who occupy the inferior departments of the Medical Profession . . p. 18.

Under the fourth head will be noticed the collateral studies and pursuits, to which his leisure may with peculiar propriety be devoted . p. 44.

I. [DUTIES OF THE MEDICAL STUDENT.]

The primary object ever to be held in view by the youth destined for the practice of Physic, is to render himself capable of fulfilling the duties of his profession by the attainment of the knowledge necessary for that purpose. The first step to be taken is the choice of the place where his medical education is to be carried on. This is a point which frequently is settled by the parents and relations of the young man; without much attention being paid to his opinion in a matter of which he cannot be supposed a very competent judge. In many cases, however, his wishes will have considerable weight. And whatever weight they may possess he is bound to throw into that scale, the preponderance of which he deems most likely to contribute to his improvement. Let him not prefer London to Edinburgh, or Leyden to Göttingen, merely because he thinks the one place more fashionable than the other; or merely that he may continue to enjoy the society of some friend, with whom he has contracted an intimacy at school or at college. Let him sacrifice inferior views and personal gratifications to the prospect of greater proficiency in medical science.

It is obvious, that no effectual insight into a science so complicated, and in many respects so

abstruse, can be acquired without industrious and regular application. Diligent attendance therefore on the different public lectures delivered by the Professors, as well as on the hospitals where the principles stated in those lectures are reduced to practice, and exemplified in the explanation of cases, and in the several methods of treating patients labouring under different diseases, or under different modifications of the same disease, and varying from each other in sex, in age, and in constitution, is indispensably requisite. To these sources of improvement the Student must not neglect to add private reading and reflection; nor the useful custom of noting down interesting particulars to which it may be highly advantageous to refer on future occasions, more especially those important facts which are to be learned at clinical lectures; nor the habit of examining himself daily in the acquisitions of the preceding day, that he may fix upon his memory what he has learned, may become conscious of the particulars which he has forgotten, and may enable himself to reconcile difficulties or seeming inconsistencies by farther consideration, or by referring them to some intelligent and experienced friend. While he applies himself principally to the theory and practice of Physic, to Anatomy, and other branches of medical knowledge, which are confessedly foremost

in point of importance; let him not omit to obtain such an acquaintance with the principles of Surgery and with the varied appearances of wounds and other surgical cases, as may fully enable him to form a proper judgment, when hereafter he shall meet Surgeons in consultation respecting patients requiring both physical and surgical aid: nor refuse to bestow a due share of his time on other collateral pursuits and acquisitions, as Chemistry, Botany, and Natural Philosophy; which, though inferior in consequence to those already mentioned, have a close connection with the healing art, and very frequently prove the foundation of its success. Chemistry, however, must always be deemed a fundamental part of medical knowledge; since the Physician, if devoid of a competent acquaintance with pharmaceutical Chemistry, would be liable to unite in the same prescription medicines which would form combinations altogether unexpected by him, and totally different in quality from the remedy designed. But the peculiar object of the Student is not to distinguish himself as a chemist, as a botanist, or as a natural philosopher. Let him not then indulge an immoderate fondness for these alluring but subordinate sciences. Of their leading principles and distinguishing features let him render himself master; but let him not prematurely expatiate in that boundless field of inquiry

which even singly they present, and conceive that he is making a rapid progress in Medicine. Hereafter, when he shall be grounded and established in his profession, a portion of his leisure will be usefully and laudably devoted to a deeper study of the various works of God, of the laws to which they are subject, and of the properties with which they are endued.

The knowledge of the Latin and Greek languages, with which the Medical Student may be supposed to have been rendered familiar by a classical education, ought to be preserved at least, if not improved, during his pursuit of professional attainments. An acquaintance with both those tongues is requisite for understanding the ancient writers on the art of Medicine: and valuable treatises on that science are still composed in Latin by foreigners. At Edinburgh, too, and in some other places, probationary or inaugural dissertations in Latin are required from every candidate for the degree of Doctor of Physic. An intimacy with the French* language is very useful to the Physician, not merely for the reasons common to men of all professions who are placed in the upper ranks of society, but likewise that he may peruse with facility the valuable tracts on medical subjects occasionally published in that tongue.

[* To which may now be added the *German* language.]

A certain degree of legal knowledge may be of material use to a Physician, and should be obtained before he commences practice. In cases of great emergency he may not only be consulted respecting the expediency of immediately making a will, but even his assistance in drawing it up may be required. It will be highly serviceable on such occasions that he should be acquainted with the forms necessary to give validity to a testamentary bequest; and also that he should be able at once to determine how the law would dispose of the sick man's property in case of intestacy; "whether his daughters or younger children would be legally entitled to any share of his fortune; whether the fortune would be equally divided, when such equality would be improper or unjust; whether diversity of claims and expensive litigations would ensue, without a will, from the nature of the property in question; and whether the creditors of the defunct would by his neglect be defrauded of their equitable[f] claims." The testimony likewise which a Physician may be called upon to give in cases of lunacy, of sudden deaths, of suicide, and of duelling, may be rendered more pertinent and impressive by an acquaintance with the laws of the land relating to those subjects.

Works of general information and of taste may

[f] *Medical Ethics*, by Dr. Percival, p. 44. [chap. iv. § 2.]

with great propriety engage the attention of the Medical Student during some of his hours of leisure. The perusal of well-chosen books of this nature, if restrained within prudent bounds, will at once unbend and improve his mind; and, instead of interfering with his peculiar occupations, will send him back to the pursuit of them with additional vigour and alacrity.

It may be necessary to add, that no studies, whether professional or of any other description, ought to be suffered to encroach on higher duties, and to lead a young man into the habit of neglecting public worship, and the private perusal and investigation of the Scriptures. In seminaries of medical instruction it is the duty of the Professors so to fix the time of visiting the hospitals with the Students on Sundays, that it may not interfere with attendance on Divine worship. If the Professors themselves set a pattern of inattention to the offices of Religion, the example may train the Pupils to habits which may affect their conduct during life in that which is of infinitely greater importance than the science which they are studying, and ultimately lead them from neglect and indifference to infidelity.

While the Student is solicitous to acquire all the advantages attainable at the place where he is stationed for improvement, let him be equally

careful to shun the errors and the vices with which it may be infected. Let him not imbibe unconquerable prejudices for the theories, the systems, the modes of practice or the authorities which reign there; nor engage in party disputes and quarrels respecting them. Let him render to all of them the deference which is their due; but let him remember that every man is fallible, and every human institution defective. Let him neglect no opportunity of enquiring into the proceedings of other seminaries of Medicine; and of deriving from competent judges information respecting their merits. This knowledge, however, may be best attained, and the comparison to which it leads pursued in the most instructive manner, by removing for a sufficient time to some other place of study, when he shall have made himself master of the opinions and customs prevalent at his own. And as it commonly happens that different seats of the same science, like different individuals of the same profession, have their peculiar excellences; he will probably be enabled by that removal to gain a more intimate acquaintance with some of the branches of his art, than he could acquire in the Lecture Room and the Hospital which he frequented before.

But above all things, in every place of study, let him strive to preserve his manners, dispositions,

and morals from being corrupted. Let him select none but the most deserving of his fellow-students to be his associates; and shun the acquaintance and the example of the idle, the extravagant, and the profligate. Let him not be persuaded or ridiculed into any degree of intemperance, or of any fashionable vice; let him not be ashamed of being singular, where singularity is virtue. Let him watchfully remember the hazard to which purity of thought is exposed, in some of the studies and investigations which his profession exacts, and the effects otherwise to be apprehended as to principle and conduct. Let him regulate his expenses with a scrupulous regard to economy, and neither contract debts nor habits which may be a future burden to his friends or to himself. Let him beware lest his heart be rendered hard, and his deportment unfeeling, by attendance on dissections of the dead, and painful operations on the living; and by being accustomed in his daily visits at an Hospital to see and hear multitudes labouring in every stage and under every variety of disease. And finally, let him not become pragmatical and pedantic in his conversation, conceited of his knowlege, and studious of displaying it; nor, by acting the part of a noisy and ostentatious declaimer at medical debating societies, contribute to transform an institution capable of

being directed to the promotion of science, into a scene of theatrical rant, and of senseless, bold, and tumultuous disputation.

II. [DUTIES OF THE PHYSICIAN BEGINNING TO PRACTISE.]

The first direction to be addressed to the young Physician, when about to enter on the exercise of his profession, is, not to begin to practise too soon. There are various inducements which may tempt him to offer himself to the world prematurely; overweening confidence in his natural abilities; extravagant ideas of the knowledge which he has acquired; the "res angusta domi;" the impatient ardour of youth; the solicitations of inconsiderate friends; and the fear of being anticipated by rivals. But human health and human life are objects with which no one can innocently tamper. The latter, once lost, is lost for ever; the former, if not altogether destroyed, is often banished or enfeebled for years by the hand of ignorant presumption. Twelve additional months devoted to preparatory studies, might have enabled the hasty practitioner to diffuse permanent joy through families, which he has now plunged into anguish and distress. The reflections and the conclusions to which these remarks will lead a conscientious mind, may be strengthened

by the following considerations. A Physician, at his first outset, must expect that his principal employment, though it will vary according to his situation, will in most places lie among those persons in the middle classes of society, who are the least opulent; as clergymen, tradesmen, shopkeepers, and people of similar descriptions. He will find that the great families in the neighbourhood are pre-occupied by some established competitor; and that, even if they are not, instead of having recourse in cases of sickness to a young stranger, they will generally prefer to send even to a much greater distance, and at an increased expense, for a Physician of known experience and skill. Now, persons in the lines of life mentioned above, are seldom in haste to consult any medical adviser beyond their Apothecary; and rarely apply for farther aid until their disorder, be it what it may, has made an alarming progress. These are circumstances which render a very ample share of knowledge highly necessary to the young practitioner. But they are not the only circumstances: for the same motives and habits which made his patients tardy in sending for him at first, will make them equally tardy in consenting to call in a coadjutor in difficult and critical situations. Hence he will often be compelled singly to encounter a malady, which, had it seized upon a Peer or a

wealthy Country-Gentleman, would have been assailed by the efforts of several of the most renowned veterans in Physic united to dislodge it.

The most obvious and the most dangerous temptation to which a young Physician is exposed, when he has actually fixed on a place of residence, and presented himself to the public as a candidate for employment, is that of taking improper methods of introducing himself into practice. From every method tinctured with deceit, or involving proceedings in any degree reprehensible, let him turn aside without hesitation, whatever prospects of success it may afford. Let him not seek to obtain, from the mistaken good-humour of his medical friends, exaggerated panegyrics on his abilities; nor urge persons of weight and credit, though not of the Faculty, to address unmerited or importunate solicitations in his favour to their acquaintance who live in his vicinity. Let him not lie in wait for opportunities of making an artful parade of his attainments, and of imposing on the unwary by a solemn, pompous, and consequential deportment, or by the sound of technical terms and learned trifling[g]. Let him not en-

[g] It is said to have happened in several instances, that Physicians, in order to gain credit, have suffered treatises to be published in their names, in the composing of which they had little or no concern.

deavour directly or indirectly to cause himself to be more highly esteemed than the testimony of his own conscience will justify; nor insidiously abuse the character and sap the credit of a rival. While he cultivates, from better motives than those of professional emolument, affability and gentleness of demeanour; let him guard against all affectation of courteousness, all assumed and delusive softness of manners. Let him not become a supple, cringing, and servile attendant on the Great; ready at all times, like the chameleon, to take the colour of surrounding objects; and catching, like an humble mimic on the stage, the habits and sentiments of his superior. Let him not become an officious instrument in the hands of some wealthy or noble patron, furthering his secret schemes, ministering to his personal or political antipathies, and flattering his religious or irreligious prejudices. Let him not pretend an attachment to a wealthy and numerous sect or party with a view to gain its support. Let him not strive to recommend himself, by bearing anecdotes of scandal from one side of the country to another; nor by gratifying curiosity with improper disclosures as to the disorders and constitutions of any of his patients; nor by addicting himself to field sports, or becoming a frequenter of gambling clubs, an attendant on riotous and

drunken meetings, or a partaker of any extravagant or vicious practice which the fashion of the times or the custom of the neighbourhood may have established. Universal temperance both in eating and drinking is particularly incumbent on a Physician in every period of his practice, not merely as being essentially requisite to preserve his faculties in that alert and unclouded state, which may render him equally able at all times to pronounce on the cases which he is called to inspect, but because it is a virtue which he will very frequently find himself obliged to inculcate on his patients; and will inculcate on them with little efficacy, if it be not regularly exemplified in his own conduct. There have been Physicians, the disgrace of their profession, who seem to have considered themselves, in studying Medicine, as studying not a liberal science, but a mere art for the acquisition of money; and have thence been solicitous to acquire an insight rather into the humours than into the diseases of mankind. The temptations which lead to such views and such conduct are not peculiar to the young Physician; but he is exposed more than his brethren to their influence. Instead of attempting to force employment by disingenuous and immoral means, let him act so as to deserve it, and he must be more than commonly unfortunate if it does

not ere long direct its course to him of its own accord[h].

III. [DUTIES OF THE PHYSICIAN IN ACTUAL PRACTICE.]

We come now to the general duties incumbent on the Physician in actual practice; that is to say, the conduct to be observed by him, 1. towards his patients, their families and friends; 2. towards other Physicians; and 3. towards persons who occupy inferior departments in the Medical Profession.

1. Diligent and early attention, proportioned, according to his power, to the emergency of the case, and an honest exertion of his best abilities, are the primary duties which the Physician owes to his patient. The performance of them is vir-

[h] Of the practices mentioned in the following quotation, I trust there have been but few examples; yet the high professional authority whence it comes, does not allow us to suppose the imputation to be entirely groundless. "A very fertile source of false facts has been opened for some time past. This is, in some young Physicians, the vanity of being the authors of observations, which are often too hastily made, and sometimes perhaps were entirely dressed in the closet. We dare not at present be particular. But the next age will discern many instances of perhaps the direct falsehoods, and certainly the many mistakes in fact, produced in the present age, concerning the powers and virtues of medicines." (Cullen, *Mater. Med.* i. 153.)

tually promised, for he knows that it is universally expected, when he undertakes the care of the sick man; and consequently, if he neglects to fulfil them, he is guilty of a direct breach of his engagement. Were any additional considerations necessary to be urged, the probable importance of the patient's recovery to his own temporal interests, and its possible importance to his eternal welfare, might be subjoined. On proper occasions secrecy likewise is incumbent on the Physician. But he ought to promise secrecy on proper occasions alone; and he should not forget to impress on his own mind, and on that of the person who consults him, that no promise of secrecy can require or justify the telling of a falsehood. When carried from home, whatever be the occasion, he ought not to omit leaving directions, by means of which, if his assistance should be required elsewhere, he may easily be found. Punctuality in attending at appointed times, when practicable, should not be in any degree neglected; lest suspicions should be with justice entertained that the Physician thinks little of the engagements into which he enters, or of the effects produced by suspense and disappointment on the anxious feelings of the sick. Want of punctuality becomes still more reprehensible, if other medical men have been purposely desired to give him the meeting.

Towards all patients, and towards female patients in particular, the utmost delicacy ought studiously to be observed; and every possible degree of care taken to avoid needlessly exciting a blush on the cheek of the modest, or a painful sensation in the breast of the virtuous.

The general behaviour of the Physician towards his patient is then the most beneficial, as well as the most amiable, when he unites with the steadiness which is necessary to secure a compliance with his injunctions, those kind and gentle manners which bespeak his sympathy with the sufferer. A prudent control over the sick person and all his attendants must ever be preserved. This object will be best attained, not by an overbearing demeanour and intemperate language, but by firmness displayed uniformly and mildly; not by the mere exercise of authority over the persons concerned, but by an occasional admixture of well directed appeals to their reason; and sometimes perhaps by the mention of opposite instances, in which the disregard of medical instructions on points similar to those in agitation has been productive of pernicious consequences. It is frequently of much importance, not to the comfort only, but to the recovery of the patient, that he should be enabled to look on his Physician as his friend. And how can the latter be looked upon as a friend,

unless his manners are characterized by kindness and compassion; not the delusive appearance of a concern which he does not feel, assumed as a professional garb through decorum, or for the ensnaring purpose of flattery; not that unmanly pity which clouds the judgement, and incapacitates it from forming a prompt, steady, and rational opinion respecting the measures to be pursued; but that genuine and sober tenderness, springing from the cultivation of habitual benevolence, which, while it wins the affection and cheers the spirits of the patient, stimulates his adviser to exert every faculty of the mind for his relief? And what but this equable mildness of disposition, cultivated on Scriptural principles, will effectually teach the Physician to bear with patience the wayward humours, and to treat with gentleness the groundless prejudices, which he must continually encounter in a sick chamber?

Under particular circumstances, or from particular motives of connection and attachment, a Physician may bestow with propriety on one of his patients a greater portion of his time and attention than he gives to others who stand equally in need of his assistance; provided that he is still sufficiently attentive to the latter. But never let him adopt this plan for the purpose of paying servile and hypocritical court to the sick man or to

his friends. Nor ever let him be seduced to do less than his duty to persons who employ him, because they are of a temper easy to be satisfied; because they happen to be poor; or because they are of such a description, that custom or some other incident renders it improper to receive fees from them.

Though the common usage of the town or of the country in which the Physician resides, will regulate the compensation which he may justly expect; yet this general rule will admit of so much latitude, and of so many exceptions, as to leave him ample scope for the exercise of liberality and benevolence. An independent and generous man will shew himself on every occasion free from the least tincture of sordid avarice. He will exercise particular forbearance in the article of fees towards those who are least able to afford them. And he will neither accept a fee when circumstances induce him to prescribe unasked; nor ever avail himself of artful pretences for visiting a person whom he knows to be out of health, in the hope that his visit, though it had not been solicited, may lead, through the politeness of the sick man or his family, to a pecuniary acknowledgement. A Physician ought to be extremely watchful against covetousness; for it is a vice imputed, justly or unjustly, to his Profession. That it is

imputed with justice I am far from meaning to affirm or to intimate. And whenever it is imputed, the time and the advice so often bestowed gratuitously by Physicians ought to be called to mind. But the existence of the charge, whether true or false, may suggest a useful admonition. If it be the fact that more avaricious men are found in the Medical Profession, in proportion to its numbers, than in others equally liberal, the conduct of its employers may be deemed one of the causes to which the redundancy must be ascribed. Such is the caprice with which a Physician is on many occasions treated by his patients and their connections; such frequently is the dissatisfaction with which his best exertions are received; that eagerness to be exempted from the necessity of practising may sometimes render him too intent on accumulating an independent fortune. Let every sick man beware that he does not contribute by his own conduct to place the temptation in his Physician's way. Let him not be fretful, impatient, and without reason discontented with his medical attendant; as though the latter had an inherent power of curing the distemper if he had thought proper, or of curing it at once as by a charm. And when more than common trouble is given, let not such an addition to the ordinary compensation as under all existing

circumstances is reasonable, be withheld, nor be given with reluctance.

In attending upon a patient, the Physician, while he omits not the reserve which prudence dictates, will shun all affectation of mystery. He will not alarm the sick man by discussing his case openly and unguardedly before him; nor will he put on a countenance of profound thought, and gestures of much seeming sagacity, either to augment his importance, or to conceal his ignorance. He will not assume the air of despising the intelligence to be obtained from the Apothecary, who may have known the constitution of the patient for years, and in his present illness sees him once or twice a day; nor even the information to be procured from nurses, who have seen him every hour. He will not implicitly adopt the opinions of the one, nor yield to the absurd fancies and prepossessions of the other; but he will add whatever is valuable in their several recitals to the result of his own personal observations, and consider the whole as a mass of premises from which he is to deduce his conclusions.

An eminent writer, speaking in a work[i] already quoted respecting the performance of surgical operations in hospitals, remarks, that it may be a salutary as well as an humane act in the attending

[i] Dr. Percival's *Medical Ethics*, p. 15. [chap. i. § 23.]

Physician occasionally to assure the patient that every thing goes on well, *if that declaration can be made with truth.* This restriction, so properly applied to the case in question, may with equal propriety be extended universally to the conduct of a Physician, when superintending operations performed not by the hand of a Surgeon, but by Nature and medicine. Humanity, we admit, and the welfare of the sick man, commonly require that his drooping spirits should be revived by every encouragement and hope which can honestly be suggested to him. But truth and conscience forbid the Physician to cheer him by giving promises, or raising expectations, which are known or intended to be delusive. The Physician may not be bound, unless expressly required, invariably to divulge at any specific time his opinion concerning the uncertainty or danger of the case; but he *is* invariably bound never to represent the uncertainty or danger as less than he actually believes it to be: and whenever he conveys, directly or indirectly, to the patient or to his family, any impression to that effect, though he may be misled by mistaken tenderness, he is guilty of positive falsehood. He is at liberty to say little; but let that little be true. St. Paul's direction*, *not to do evil that good may come*, is clear, positive,

* [Rom. iii. 8.]

and universal. And if the Scriptures had contained no injunction such as that which has been quoted, but had left the Physician at liberty to decide the point on grounds of expediency, he would have had sufficient reason to be convinced that falsehood could promise but little even of the temporary advantage expected from it: for, when once his employers should know (and they soon *must* know,) his principle and his custom to be that of not adhering to truth in his declarations respecting his patient, his vain encouragements and delusive assurances would cease to cheer the sick man and his friends. It may be urged, perhaps, that his reserve will generally be misconstrued by the anxiety of those who are interested for the sick; and being considered as a proof of his opinion that the disorder is highly formidable, will continually foster or excite apprehensions as groundless as they are distressing. A moderate share however of prudence, united with that facility which is naturally acquired by practice, of avoiding needless disclosures, and avoiding them without sliding into deceit either expressly or impliedly, will enable him to guard against producing unnecessary alarms. And they will be still less likely to be produced, if the uniformity of his conduct makes it evident to those who employ him, that, while he cautiously refrains from repre-

senting the case before him in a more favourable light than he views it, he is equally solicitous and watchful to give early communications of probable or actual danger. The state of the malady, when critical or hazardous, ought to be plainly declared without delay to some at least of the patient's near relations; and, except under extraordinary circumstances, to the nearest. On many occasions it may be the duty of the Physician spontaneously to reveal it to the patient himself. It may sometimes also be incumbent on him to suggest to the sick man, or to his friends, the propriety of adjusting all unfinished temporal concerns: and conscience will frequently prompt him discreetly to turn the thoughts of the former towards Religion. Not that the Physician is officiously to intrude into the department of the Minister of the Gospel. But he may often smooth the way for the Clergyman's approach; and on those who have been unfortunate enough to imbibe doubts as to the truth of Christianity, he may in some instances make a first impression, which the Clergyman would in vain have attempted to produce. For the visits of the latter being foreseen, and his professional prejudices suspected, the mind would have previously armed itself against him; and his arguments would have been heard with reluctance and distrust. But the Physician labours under no such

suspicions. His belief in Revelation, though it may be thought absurd, is yet deemed disinterested and sincere. He can select his times and opportunities; he can pursue the subject under various forms, and to a greater or a less extent, without allowing his design to become too obvious; and in the earlier stages of disease, while the understanding of his patient is unclouded, and his strength equal to the exertion of temperate discussion, may be able occasionally to lead him into a willing investigation of the evidences and doctrines of the Christian faith, which may terminate in rational and decided conviction.

But while he is thus anxious to promote the most important interests of his patients, who have been unhappy enough to fall into vice or scepticism; let him open his own heart to the very great improvement, which it may receive from the example of those of a different description. Let him learn beforehand from the sincere Christian to bear those evils which it is now his office to alleviate, but may shortly be his lot to endure. Let him learn beforehand to recognise the goodness and mercy of his God during the pangs of racking pain, and the languor and wearisomeness of lingering decay. Let him learn that the humble recollection of a life characterised by faith manifesting itself in holiness, and the cheering consolations

and promises of the Gospel, alone can enable him to suffer with patient fortitude, and to die with hope, with gratitude, with tranquillity, with joy.

The conduct of a Physician whose solicitude for the recovery of his patient is founded on pure motives, will be free from the bias of private and personal considerations in the application of his art. He will neither be too fond of novelties, nor too fearful of deviating on proper occasions and on solid grounds from the beaten track: he will not obtrude some mysterious nostrum illiberally concealed from the knowledge of his brethren: he will not cherish prepossessions against remedies and modes of proceeding introduced by others, nor partiality for those discovered by himself. He will not conceive himself as descending from professional dignity, when in emergencies he mixes a medicine for his patient, or performs any other office or operation for his benefit, which in strictness appertained to the Surgeon, or would have devolved on the Apothecary had he been at hand; nor hesitate to see aliment prepared, nor to direct how it may be diversified so as to be pleasing to the palate of the sick; nor to tender the food, which, though it had just before been refused, will often be accepted from the hand of the Physician. He will not be influenced by blind and in-

discriminate confidence in the subordinate medical attendance, much less by actual indolence or carelessness, or a fear of giving offence, to neglect the frequent inspection of his patient's medicines. He will be the first to suggest in critical or uncommon circumstances the propriety of calling in additional aid. He will not indulge a lurking wish to persevere in a dubious or unsuccessful system of medical treatment, from the apprehension that a change will argue ignorance in himself, or redound to the credit of another person who may have suggested it. He will never recommend as a probable method of cure a course which he does not actually believe likely to prove so. He will not advise a journey to a public watering-place, apparently from anxiety for the sick man, but in reality from a desire to please his wife and daughter by sending them to a scene of fashionable amusement; or in dangerous or hopeless maladies merely to remove the sufferer to a distance, instead of having him continue at home to die under his immediate care. He will not prescribe a medicine, the propriety of which he distrusts, because it is proposed by the patient or recommended by his friends, without explicitly declaring his own opinion of it. He will remember, that, though his responsibility may be removed if he acquiesces in their desire after this declaration, he is as truly responsible for the

consequences of a mode of treatment suggested by another, and adopted by him without any intimation of its probable effects, as he would have been had it originated with himself. He will not become boastful and arrogant when his exertions are crowned with success; but will recollect that he is an humble instrument in the hands of that Being, Who gives knowledge to the Physician and health to the sick. Neither will he desert his patient when there no longer remain hopes of recovery. Though life cannot be retained, pain may be mitigated. Even if the patient seems beyond the reach of medicine, the presence of the Physician will compose the minds and alleviate the sorrow of friends and relations. But in those circumstances a man of liberality will be anxious to evince, by moderation in the receipt of fees, that compassion and gratitude, not avarice and deceit, prompt his attendance.

Continual intercourse with disease, and the habit of breathing in morbid atmospheres, seem, through the wise and merciful appointment of Providence, commonly to secure the Physician from infection. Hence cases of contagion can rarely arise, in which these considerations, joined to a sense of the duties imposed on him by the profession into which he has entered, will not bind him calmly to obey the summons of the afflicted,

and encounter all personal hazard. Experience however has proved, that a Physician may convey to others a distemper which is unable to fasten upon himself. In passing therefore from one family to another, when the former is visited with a malady easily communicable, as a putrid fever, to people in general; or as the small-pox, to those whom it has not heretofore attacked; let him guard by all requisite precautions against introducing into the latter house an inmate more formidable than that which he comes to expel.

Though some of the observations, which have been made under the present head, are applicable to the Physician only when attending on patients in the upper and middle ranks of society; the greater number have likewise an obvious reference to his duty when visiting the poor. Persons of the latter description will principally come under his care in his capacity as Physician to an hospital, or to some other medical charity. On the subject of hospital practice it may not be improper to subjoin a caution against making unnecessary or rash experiments in the treatment of the patients. The science of Medicine undoubtedly derives continual accessions of improvement from the inventive genius of its followers. New substances are introduced into the materia medica; new modes are discovered of preparing and of combining drugs

already in use, and new applications of ancient remedies to the cure of diseases in which recourse was never had to them before. In many respects an hospital presents a field peculiarly inviting for pushing these discoveries. Instances may there be found at hand of almost every complaint; many experiments may there be going on at once, and be inspected in their several stages by a single glance of the eye. To these inducements we may add another, though it will operate only on unprincipled men, (who however will occasionally find their way into the medical, as into every other profession,) that in the populous wards of an infirmary the ill success of an adventurous trial is lost in the crowd of fortunate and unfortunate events; and even if it should terminate in the death of an obscure, indigent, and quickly forgotten individual, little if any disadvantage results to the credit and interest of the Physician among his wealthy employers. It is not meant by these remarks to censure experiments designed to lessen the danger or the sufferings of the individual, when founded on rational analogies, commenced after mature deliberation, conducted by upright and skilful men, watched during the whole progress with circumspect attention, and abandoned in time should unfavourable appearances take place: but it *is* meant strongly to

reprobate every experiment[k] rashly or hastily adopted; or carried on by the selfish, the ignorant, the careless, or the obstinate. Proceedings of this nature are highly criminal, partly because they involve the health and life of the sufferers in great and needless hazards, and partly because they tend to confirm an opinion already too prevalent in some places in the minds of the poor, that such is the general conduct of Hospital Physicians: an opinion, which, wherever it exists, strikes at the root of the chief advantages to be derived from one of the most excellent of charitable institutions, by deterring persons, for whose benefit infirmaries are particularly designed, from

[k] Experiments are not unfrequently made upon living animals by Physicians, in the course of their private researches, for the purpose of ascertaining the properties of drugs, or other facts of importance in medical and anatomical science. Neither the right nor the propriety of making these experiments on reasonable occasions can be disputed; but every degree of needless and inconsiderate cruelty in prosecuting them will be avoided with scrupulous care by men of feeling and conscientious reflection. And whenever they are painful and shocking in the execution, they ought not to be made to develope processes of nature, from the knowledge of which no benefit seems likely to result; to support and elucidate unimportant opinions in Comparative Anatomy; or in any way to gratify idle curiosity: nor should they be repeated, though originally useful, after they have proved all that is expected from them; and when the results have been so carefully ascertained, that they may be received as data already established.

entering within their walls, except in the most pressing emergency; and filling them with gloomy apprehensions and terrors until the happy moment of their escape. Similar remarks may be applied to the case of amputations, and other operations of magnitude in hospitals; which should never be performed without the concurrent approbation of the Physicians and Surgeons, given by each, not as a matter of form, but with a consciousness of his personal responsibility for any needless injury or torture caused to the patient. While there is a possibility of restoring the use of a limb, or of preserving it without endangering life, whatever time may be requisite for attaining the object, it ought not to be amputated either to shew the dexterity of the operator, or because the stump will be sooner cured than the limb, and the patient will thus become less burdensome to the charity. The intention of the charity is to cure and to preserve; and, even if credit be regarded, more is gained by one difficult cure than by many successful amputations.

A benevolent Physician will not restrict his attendance on the poor to those whom the bounty of the public brings before him. He will not neglect the opportunities which will occur, in his visits to families resident in different parts of the country, of giving gratuitous advice to the sick

and infirm villagers who may be mentioned to him as worthy of his notice; and will attend, as far as his necessary avocations permit, to the maladies of persons in indigent circumstances who live in his own neighbourhood, and are desirous of consulting him[1].

2. The proper behaviour of a Physician to his competitors, and to the inferior members of the Medical Profession, holds a prominent station among the general duties which he has to discharge in the common course of his practice. If he views those duties aright, he will conduct himself to all these individuals under all circumstances on Christian principles, with Christian temper,

[1] The following quotation from "Medical Ethics," (p. 89,) relates to public duties of another kind incumbent on Physicians. "It is a complaint made by Coroners, Magistrates, and Judges, that Medical Gentlemen are often reluctant in the performance of those offices required from them as citizens qualified by professional knowledge to aid the execution of public justice. These offices, it must be confessed, are generally painful, always inconvenient, and occasion an interruption to business, of a nature not to be easily appreciated or compensated. But as they admit of no substitution, they are to be regarded as appropriate debts to the community, which neither equity nor patriotism will allow to be cancelled.

"When a Physician is called to give evidence, he should avoid as much as possible all obscure and technical terms, and the unnecessary display of medical erudition. He should also deliver what he advances, in the purest and most delicate language consistent with the nature of the subject in question." [chap. iv. § 18.]

and with a scrupulous regard to the attentions which they may reasonably expect, and the privileges which they may justly claim, in consequence of their respective situations. He will contend with his rivals for public favour openly and equitably. He will never attempt to supplant them by ungenerous artifices, by secret obloquy, by publishing or by cunningly aggravating their mistakes, or by depreciating their estimation in the eyes of the world by ridicule of their persons, characters, or habits. He will not strive to keep exclusive possession of the district in which he is employed, by crushing young practitioners, who, on their outset in life, fix themselves within its limits. He will not be led by pride and jealousy to oppose the admission of other Physicians to a joint share with himself in the superintendence of hospitals and dispensaries: a line of conduct the more to be reprobated, as it not only precludes deserving men from obvious and fair sources of credit and improvement; but at the same time robs the Charity of the benefit of their assistance, and perhaps impairs its revenues by giving rise to animosities and dissensions among its supporters. Yet, as he will be a better judge of the medical abilities of candidates for admission than most of the Governors of the charity, it is his duty (notwithstanding that he may incur the risk of mis-

representation,) to let his opinion be known, if persons offer themselves of whose unfitness for the situation he is thoroughly convinced. He will not insultingly triumph over competitors to whom he finds himself preferred. He will not harbour sentiments of envy and hatred towards his fortunate antagonists, not even if they are called in by his own former patients. Nor will he feel animosity or any portion of resentment with respect to those individuals, on account of their having exercised their indisputable right of employing a new Physician, who in their estimation, and perhaps in reality, is entitled to the preference. He will be ready to meet in consultations, without being influenced by private dislike, by antecedent disputes, or by other personal motives whatever, any Physician for whose advice the sick man or his friends may be solicitous; and, while he carefully examines the grounds of his new coadjutor's opinion, will beware of being obstinately fixed in his own. When summoned to take the charge of a case which has previously been in other hands, he will give to the persons already employed the credit fairly due to them: he will judge their proceedings with candour and impartiality, and abstain not merely from deriding, but from needlessly censuring or exposing their defects. And if his exertions should finally prove more successful than theirs have been, he

will remember that the method of treatment pursued by his predecessors may yet have been highly judicious, or at all events worthy of trial, at the time when it was adopted; and that the ineffectual attempts which they made, and perhaps the errors into which they may have fallen, may be the very circumstances which have thrown a degree of light on the malady sufficient to enable him to cure it. He will study to preserve that amicable intercourse between his medical brethren and himself, which may lead to an habitual, free, and mutually beneficial communication of interesting facts which may occur to them in the circle of their practice. He will refrain from every approach towards obtrusive interference with respect to a case already under the management of another. And if extraordinary or peculiar circumstances should in any instance lead him to conclude on mature deliberation that some interference on his part is an act of indispensable duty; he will discharge that duty in such a manner as to refute, if it be possible, the suspicions which he must expect to incur of having been impelled by selfish considerations, or by other motives equally unwarrantable. He will assist his competitors, when absent or out of health, with promptitude and with evident disinterestedness; and will at all times be just in his representations of their merits. He will not at-

tempt to bring forward ignorant or worthless Physicians, because they happen to be his relations or his countrymen, to have been educated at the same school with himself, to have been students at the same college, or to be recommended to him by his particular friends. He will not entertain absurd prejudices against any of his rivals, through an unfavourable opinion of the university from which they received their degrees. Nor will he scornfully exclude from all the privileges of fellowship intelligent Medical Practitioners, who have not been fortunate enough to receive a degree from any university; when they give proofs of actually possessing those attainments, of which an academical education is considered as the basis, and a Degree regarded as presumptive evidence.

3. To possess the countenance and recommendation of an eminent Apothecary is frequently of no small service to a Physician, not merely at his outset in life, but even when he is established in practice. Hence mean and interested men have been known to resort to most unworthy methods of securing this assistance. "It is a known fact[m], that, in many parts of Europe, Physicians who have the best parts and best education must yet depend for their success in life upon Apothecaries who have no pretensions either to the one or to

[m] Gregory's *Lectures*, p. 45.

the other; and that this obligation is too often repaid by what every one who is concerned for the honour of Medicine must reflect on with pain and indignation." In this country, it may be presumed, examples of Physicians, who would contract that obligation on the terms of repaying it in the manner here indicated, or in any similar way, are so rare[n], that it is unnecessary to dwell on the subject. It may be added, however, that a Physician who pushes into business ignorant and undeserving Surgeons and Apothecaries from motives of groundless partiality, or from the impulse of private friendship without respect to personal merit; acts a part less culpable indeed in itself, but not less detrimental to the public, than if his conduct had originated in a secret understanding between himself and them, founded on views of base and fraudulent advantage. And on the other hand, to employ his influence with his patients to the prejudice of skilful and meritorious men, in consequence of rash and ungenerous surmises, would be a proceeding highly to be condemned: to employ it thus through a private grudge would be the extreme of baseness.

[n] Yet it is said to have happened more than once in London, that an old established Apothecary has received half of a Physician's fees in return for his indiscriminate recommendation.

The nature of the Medical Profession generally introduces the Physician to such private and unreserved intercourse with the families which he attends, as is capable either of being grossly abused, or of being turned to purposes of great and general utility. If he divulges those personal weaknesses, or betrays those domestic secrets, which come to his knowledge in the course of his employment; if he bears tales of slander from house to house; if he foments quarrels and aggravates misunderstandings; he is deserving of severer censure than words can convey. Whatever he witnesses humiliating and disgraceful in the habitation of one patient, he should wish to forget before he enters that of another. He ought to watch for opportunities, and embrace them, (though with prudence, yet with alacrity,) of removing prejudices, and obviating differences between neighbours; whether arising from private disputes, from religious bigotry, or from the violence of political opposition. He may thus be the happy instrument of allaying those mental irritations, which disturb social peace; and confer by his benevolent mediation a more important service on the parties whom he leads to a renewal of cordiality, than if he had relieved them by his skill from an afflicting bodily disease. He may also contribute to diffuse just sentiments on a great variety of subjects, and to excite a taste for

useful and liberal knowledge among those with whom he is in habits of familiarity as a friend or as a Physician, by studying to render his conversation generally improving; by discreetly introducing topics adapted for calm and rational discussion; and by occasionally bringing forward without parade or ostentation facts in natural history and discoveries in science, sufficiently interesting to awaken the curiosity of his hearers, yet not so abstruse as to perplex their understandings.

Finally, let the Physician scrupulously continue to avoid, when he feels himself firmly established in practice, every reprehensible proceeding, either with respect to gaining employment, or conducting himself in it, which he conceived it right to shun when he first offered himself to the world; and with equal care persist in cultivating every good quality by which he was originally desirous of recommending himself. Let him consider himself through life as a learner; and instead of resting satisfied with a tolerable knowledge of the common routine of diseases and prescriptions, endeavour to accumulate every year a new fund of professional information. And let him not forget the wise advice of the poet*,

"Solve senescentem mature sanus equum, ne
"Peccet ad extremum."

* [Horace, *Epist.* i. 1. 8.]

Let him resign his post in time to his successors; and not strive in the wane of his strength and faculties to retain the practice, which habit and old connections may perhaps cause to linger around him long after the period when it ought to have been voluntarily declined by himself.

IV. [COLLATERAL PURSUITS ADAPTED TO THE LEISURE HOURS OF A PHYSICIAN.]

It remains briefly to mention the pursuits and occupations, to which the leisure hours of the Physician may with peculiar propriety be devoted.

That general acquaintance with works of literature unconnected with medical improvement, which is naturally expected in men of liberal educations and cultivated minds, is by no means to be neglected by him. But I allude at present to those studies which are more nearly allied to his profession. He will now be able to gratify to a considerable extent that passion for chemical, botanical, and mineralogical enquiries, that thirst for philosophical acquisitions, that eagerness to trace the properties of bodies and the laws of Nature by a chain of scientific experiments, which prudence and more pressing duties may have forbidden him to indulge in the earlier period of his life. If he always bears in mind that the value of knowledge

is proportioned to its practical utility, he will consequently be solicitous to render all his attainments subservient to the happiness of others as well as to his own. This leading desire of promoting the glory of God by contributing to the welfare of man will induce him to communicate to the public, through some proper channel selected according to the circumstances of the occasion, and with that perspicuous simplicity of style which befits didactic writing, every beneficial discovery at which he may have arrived either in the course of his private studies, or of his professional employment. He will not subject himself, by committing his thoughts to the press without sufficient previous enquiry, to the charge of purloining the discoveries of others; nor of being vain of communicating that which is either unworthy of notice, or as yet but feebly and imperfectly developed, or hastily inferred from few and inadequate trials. In the recital of facts he will not neglect to state every thing fairly and fully, as well those things which seem to corroborate the conclusion which he deduces, as those which appear indifferent, or militate against it; nor will he artfully throw the latter circumstances into shadow, while he brings forward the former into the strongest light. If in consequence of any thing which he has done, or of any thing which he has published, he should find himself driven into a

controversy, let him conduct the literary warfare with becoming temper. Let him neither display nor feel bitterness towards his antagonist; let him overlook and freely forgive any acrimony which may chance to be manifested towards himself. By supporting his own arguments, while he thinks them just, without being dogmatical; and by candidly giving them up, when he finds them erroneous; let him shew that he is less anxious for victory than for the elucidation of truth.

The Medical Journals of eminence published in foreign countries, as well as those established in his own, will properly engage his attention. From the one and the other class of writings he will probably derive very important assistance in the discharge of his duty as a Physician. Particular caution however may be requisite in the practical application of the intelligence which he gains from the former source; as remedies and modes of treatment which are crowned with success in one country, may prove by no means equally suited to patients who live in another climate, and in very different habits of life.

By taking an active part in promoting and superintending useful medical institutions, a Physician may render essential services to the community. To his zeal and industry may be owing the erection or the good management of hospitals, of

dispensaries, of asylums for lunatics°, and the establishment of societies for the relief of decayed members of the Medical Profession, their widows, and their orphans*. His exertions, however, ought to be conducted with such prudence and candour, as to make it evident to every impartial observer that they are not prompted by vanity or interested views; but result entirely from an earnest wish to relieve the distresses of the afflicted, and to promote the improvement of the science of Medicine in all its branches. To the poor, as already has been intimated, his charitable aid should be cheerfully extended, not only when they are brought before him by means of public institutions, or are recommended to his care in the course of his distant circuits; but whenever the vicinity of their

° It is one of the offices of a Physician to visit, when required by the magistrates of the district, private houses licensed for the reception of insane patients, and to report the state of them. In drawing up those reports impartiality and plain dealing are indispensable duties.

* [Of these Societies (besides several whose benefits are confined to certain counties and districts,) there are in England the four following: 1. "Society for Relief of Widows and Orphans of Medical Men in London and its Vicinity," instituted in 1788; 2. "Medical Benevolent Society, for the Relief of its distressed Members," instituted in 1816; 3. "Benevolent Fund of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association," instituted in 1836, for the relief of distressed medical men, and their widows and orphans; and 4. "General Medical Annuity Fund," instituted in 1845, for the relief of distressed Members, and their widows and orphans.]

residence to his own gives them a peculiar claim on his compassion, and enables him at a very small expenditure of time and trouble to confer many an important and durable benefit. The last-mentioned object will in most situations be attained with the utmost possible enlargement of the numbers of those who consult him, as well as with the greatest convenience to himself, by setting apart an appointed time in every week for giving gratuitous advice to the indigent. Perhaps too he may in some cases have it in his power, in conjunction with friends as liberal as himself, to carry the exercise of benevolence still farther, by supplying medicines to those, who, from their extraordinary poverty or singular disorders, are entitled to more than usual pity, and who have not the opportunity of obtaining relief from dispensaries or hospitals. And in other cases, by recommending the distressed poor to the attention of the opulent in their neighbourhood, he may procure them necessaries and comforts, which otherwise they never would have possessed, and to which they may owe their recovery.

There are various other ways in which a Physician may contribute to the preservation and improvement of the public health. One of the most obvious and efficacious methods is studiously to avail himself of those opportunities, which his pro-

fessional employment affords, of imparting useful information to Apothecaries. Throughout the whole kingdom Apothecaries are the Physicians of the lower classes of society in almost every complaint; and, except in the metropolis and some few other towns peculiarly circumstanced, execute the same office to the higher classes in all disorders not very alarming. It is therefore of the highest consequence that they should be thoroughly competent to perform the task which is assigned to them. And each Physician may continually add to the knowledge of those with whom he is conversant, not only by fully explaining to them his ideas respecting every case in which they are employed together; but likewise by suggesting and occasionally lending to them instructive books; and by apprising them of new modes of practice, and new discoveries as to medicines, of which, had it not been for his communication, they might never have heard, and without the authority of his recommendation would never have ventured to make trial. A Physician may also save many lives by devising and rendering public salutary precautions, by which the health and constitutions of artisans, who work in unwholesome manufactures, may be preserved; and by turning his attainments in chemistry and other branches of science to the invention of new processes equal or superior in

point of cheapness and utility to those at present in use, and free from all noxious influence on those who conduct them. The custom of burying in churches (which among other bad consequences is frequently deemed an insuperable obstacle to the introduction of fires into those edifices; and thus occasions the air to be retained in so cold and damp a state as to deter many infirm people from attending divine worship in severe seasons, and to endanger the health of more;) might perhaps be restricted by the united efforts of medical men to those cases in which the use of leaden coffins, or of other means equally effectual, prevents the escape of contaminated vapour.

The opinion of a Physician of character frequently determines the place and mode of study for young men destined for the Medical Profession. He who is consulted on these points ought to reflect how materially the advice which he gives may affect the advantages of the other party during life; and divesting himself of prejudices which he may have contracted in favour of the seminary where he was educated, a seminary now perhaps much degenerated, or for the course of study which he pursued there, a course which experience may since have shewn to be ill arranged and defective; let him give an honest preference to that situation and that method of proceeding, which he deems

under existing circumstances the best calculated for the advantage of the student.

The charge of infidelity and contempt of Religion has often been alleged against the Medical Profession. This imputation is strenuously repelled by Dr. Gregory. "Medicine," he observes[p], "of all professions should be the least suspected of leading to impiety. An intimate acquaintance with the works of Nature elevates the mind to the most sublime conceptions of the Supreme Being; and at the same time dilates the heart with the most pleasing prospects of Providence. The difficulties that must necessarily attend all deep enquiries into a subject so disproportionate to the human faculties, should not be expected to surprise a Physician; who in his daily practice is involved in perplexity and darkness, even in subjects exposed to the examination of his senses." This charge may have been made on partial and insufficient grounds; but the existence of it should excite the efforts of every conscientious Physician to rescue himself from the general stigma. It should stimulate him not to affect a sense of Religion which he does not entertain; but openly to avow that which he actually feels. And it gives additional force to those reasons which ought to impel the Physician, in common with other men, to employ an adequate

[p] *Lectures*, p. 62.

portion of his leisure in studying the Holy Scriptures, and making himself master of the external and the internal evidences of Christianity[q].

If the charge be in some measure true, it is of importance to the Physician to ascertain the causes from which the fact has originated, that he may be the more on his guard against their influence. The following circumstances may not have been without their weight. They who are accustomed to deep researches into any branch of philosophical science; and find themselves able to explain to their own satisfaction almost every phænomenon, and to account, as they apprehend, for almost every effect, by the operation of such causes as in ordinary language are termed *natural;* are apt to acquire extravagant ideas of the sufficiency of human reason on all subjects: and thus learning to doubt the necessity, become prejudiced against the belief, of Divine Revelation. In the next place, they who justly disclaim the empire of authority in medical theories, may carelessly proceed to regard religious doctrines as theories resting on no other foundation, and deserving of no better fate. Thirdly,

[q] The charge in question is not peculiar to Great Britain. A French gentleman of much information said to me very lately: "Je ne sais s'il en est de même des médecins en Angleterre comme des médecins de France. La plûpart des médecins de France n'ont point de Réligion. Ils ne croyent ni en l'immortalité de l'âme, ni en DIEU."

it is to be observed, that men may be divided into two distinct classes, with respect to the sort of testimony on which they receive truths of any kind. They who are chiefly addicted to investigations and reasonings founded on analogy, look primarily and with extreme partiality to that species of evidence; and if the thing asserted appears contrary to the common course of Nature, more especially if it militates against any theory of their own, (and such persons are much disposed to theorise,) they are above measure reluctant to admit the reality of it; and withhold their assent until such a number of particular proofs, incapable of being resolved into fraud or misconception, is produced, as would have been far more than sufficient to convince[r] an unbiassed understanding:

[r] Thus, before the qualities of the magnet were known in this country, if a traveller had reported that he had seen a mineral endued with the property of attracting iron, and of giving it a permanent tendency to point towards the north pole; a person used to argue very much from analogy would probably have at once declared the assertion absurd and incredible; and laying very unreasonable stress on the total absence of any similar property in other minerals, would have remained unmoved by evidence, which would justly have been satisfactory to a mind accustomed to estimate the credit due to particular facts chiefly by their own independent proofs.

Of the effect of the sort of prejudice under consideration no example can be produced so truly surprising, as Mr. Hume's celebrated (I had almost said *childish*,) argument against the credibility of miracles; an argument, according to which the first account of an eclipse of the sun, of the

whereas other men, little used to analogical enquiries, look not around for such testimony either in support or in refutation of an extraordinary circumstance affirmed to them; but readily give credit to the fact on its own distinct proofs, or from confidence in the veracity and discernment of the relator. It is evident that Physicians are to be ranked in the class first described, and are consequently liable to its prejudices. And it is equally evident that those prejudices will render all on whom they fasten particularly averse to recognise the truth of miracles; and will probably prevent them from examining with impartiality the evidence of a religion founded on miracles, and perhaps from examining it at all. Fourthly, to the preceding circumstances must be added the neglect of Divine worship too customary among persons of the Medical Profession. This neglect seems to have contributed not only to excite and to strengthen the opinion of their scepticism and infidelity; but sometimes to produce scepticism and infidelity itself. For it is a natural progress, that

appearance of a comet, of the eruption of a volcano, in short of any phænomenon which had not antecedently been known to occur in the course of Nature, ought necessarily to have been deemed unworthy of the slightest credit, however strongly attested; and the averred facts to have been pronounced incapable of being proved by any testimony whatever.

he who habitually disregards the public duties of Religion, should soon omit those which are private; should speedily begin to wish that Christianity may not be true; should then proceed to doubt its truth; and at length should disbelieve it.

It must be admitted that the Physician is precluded by the nature of his occupation from the regular performance of public religious duties. His time is not at his own disposal; he is liable every moment to calls, which will not admit of denial or delay; and he knows from unquestionable authority that "mercy is better than sacrifice*." But there is great danger, even if his faith remain unshaken, that the impossibility at one time of attending at church, and at another the uncertainty, whether, if he goes thither, he should be permitted to continue there unto the conclusion of the service, may lead him unawares into a habit of absenting himself altogether from public worship. At any rate it is in his power, and it is manifestly his duty, to embrace all opportunities which find him disengaged; and so to contrive the arrangement of his visits on Sundays, if the situation of his patients will permit, as to leave himself sufficient space in the former or in the latter part of the day to unite with his fellow Christians in prayers and praises to his Maker. And let him

* [Hos. vi. 6.]

not be deterred by an apprehension (which, if it were not sometimes avowed, would not have seemed worthy of being noticed,) that he may probably be supposed to have come to church with the hope, or with the premeditated design, of being summoned away in the face of the congregation, and of thus augmenting the idea of his business and importance. His general character and conduct must be already despicable, if they will not exempt him, in proportion as they are known, from the suspicion of such dissimulation.

Finally, let not the Physician hesitate, through a servile or avaricious fear of offending some of his patients, and losing their future employment, to take an active and steady but temperate part in any local or public business which may arise, when his conscience tells him that he ought to stand forward. The members of every profession have their trials, and are called upon at times to make their peculiar sacrifices. And he who shrinks back when put to the proof, may advance perhaps some of his petty interests of the moment; but he advances them at the expense of Christian duty.

Deo Gloria.

Published (uniform in 16mo.) by John Henry Parker, Oxford, and John Churchill, Princes Street, Soho, London.

HUFELAND ON THE RELATIONS OF THE PHYSICIAN, to the Sick, to the Public, and to his Colleagues. 1846. *9d.*

LIFE OF GEORGE CHEYNE, M.D., with Extracts from his Works and Correspondence. 1846. *2s. 6d.*

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LIFE OF THE REV. SIR JAMES STONHOUSE, Bart., M.D., with Extracts from his Tracts and Correspondence. 1844. *4s. 6d.*

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PRAYERS FOR THE USE OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION. 1842. *2s. 6d.*

Preparing for Publication.

LIFE OF DR. THOMAS WILLIS.
LIFE OF DR. JOHN MASON GOOD.

The profits of these little works, if any, will be given to some Medical Charity.

ANECDOTA SYDENHAMIANA: Medical notes and Observations of THOMAS SYDENHAM, M.D., hitherto unpublished. *Second Edition.* 16mo., 1847. *2s.*

PROSPECTUS.

1. It is proposed (with God's assistance,) to publish in a series the lives of those Physicians who have been most eminent for their piety, in whatever age and country they may have lived.

2. The profits (if any,) arising from these publications will be given eventually to some Medical Charity.

3. In this undertaking the Editor will be happy to receive literary assistance from such of his friends as may take an interest in the work.

4. As the whole of the present expense and risk falls upon the Editor alone, he will gladly accept any donations or subscriptions in aid of the design from persons who may feel an interest in it.

5. The lives will of course vary much in length, some forming each a volume of itself, and others constituting a distinct class consisting of much shorter notices. The volumes will not be published in any particular order, but they will be strictly uniform in size, type, &c.

6. The number of volumes to be published annually must depend on the amount of money received either from the sale of the works, or from the donations of friends.

7. The Editor will be answerable for the general accuracy and fidelity of the narratives, for the tone and spirit of the whole work, and for the selection of the lives to be published; and accordingly he will be deeply pained, if any person of piety and good sense shall consider, either that he has inserted in his list any name but those of Physicians really fearing GOD and loving CHRIST, or that he has published any life written in a low or unchristian spirit: but, as it is proposed to comprehend Physicians of all ages and countries, and not merely those who have been members of the Church of England, (still less those who have belonged to this or that particular party in it,) it is manifest that neither the Editor nor the Writers are to be considered responsible for the particular theological opinions which any of these individuals may have held.

All Saints' Day, 1844.

The Editor will be much obliged to any one who will furnish him with any Letters, Papers, or information of any kind, relating to the life and character of the following individuals:—

JOHN ABERCROMBIE, M.D.; - born 1781, died 1844.
WILL. DE BAILLOU, (*Ballonius,*) M.D.; born 1538, died 1616.
SIR RICHARD BLACKMORE, M.D.; born ——, died 1729.
WILLIAM BLAIR; - - - born ——, died 1822.
HERMAN BOERHAAVE, M.D.; - born 1668, died 1738.
SIR THOMAS BROWNE, M.D.; - born 1605, died 1682.
JOHN FOTHERGILL, M.D.; - born 1712, died 1780.
JOHN MASON GOOD, M.D.; - born 1766, died 1827.
ALBERT VON HALLER, M.D.; - born 1708, died 1777.
JOHN HAMON, M.D.; - - born 1618, died 1687.
DAVID HARTLEY, M.D.; - - born 1705, died 1757.
PHILIP HECQUET, M.D.; - - born 1661, died 1737.
WILLIAM HEY; - - - - born 1736, died 1819.
JAMES HOPE, M.D.; - - born 1801, died 1841.
CHRIST. WILL. HUFELAND, M.D.; born 1762, died 1836.
JAMES KENNEDY, M.D.; - - born ——, died 1827.
PHILIP SYNG PHYSICK, M.D.; - born 1768, died 1837.
BENJAMIN RUSH, M.D.; - - born 1745, died 1813.
JOHN RUTTY, M.D.; - - born 1698, died 1775.
THOMAS SYDENHAM, M.D.; - born 1624, died 1689.
SIMON ANDREW TISSOT, M.D.; - born 1728, died 1797.
CHARLES BRANDON TRYE; - born 1757, died 1811.
MICHAEL UNDERWOOD, M.D.; - born 1737, died 1820.
ROBERT WILLAN, M.D.; - - born 1757, died 1812.
THOMAS WILLIS, M.D.; - - born 1622, died 1675.

June 1847.